

Public Notice of Release of Draft Compatibility Determinations and Draft Pre-Acquisition Compatibility Determinations for Wildlife Observation, Photography, Environmental Education and Interpretation, Canoe/Kayak Landing/Launching, Boater-only Camping, Dog Walking, and Tribal Access and Gathering at the proposed Ma-le'l Dunes Unit, Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge, has prepared Draft Compatibility Determinations for public use of the southern-most parcel of the Lanphere Dunes Unit, and the proposed addition of the Ma-le'l Dunes parcel (formerly known as Humboldt Buggy and ATV Association parcel, currently owned by the Center for Natural Lands Management). Compatibility Determinations are developed as part of the land protection planning process associated with additions to existing refuges whenever there is an existing, owner-authorized, wildlife-dependent, priority public use occurring on the lands to be included in the refuge, whenever the public has requested that a new use be allowed on a refuge, or when the Service proposes to allow a new use upon acquisition. Priority public uses, as defined by the Service, include hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation. All comments received during the public review process will be considered in making the Final Compatibility Determination, and will be placed on file as part of the official administrative record. The uses proposed for the Ma-le'l Dunes Unit are based on those that existed on former Mad River Slough and Dunes Cooperative Management Area during the early 1990s, including wildlife observation, photography, environmental education and interpretation, canoe/kayak landing launching, dog walking. In addition, two new uses have been proposed: boater-only campground and tribal access and gathering. Use would be confined to existing and/or new trails and open sand areas, during daylight hours. The determination takes into account information on known ecologically and culturally sensitive resources on the site, and the potential impact of considered uses. The Draft Compatibility Determination finds all uses compatible with the exception of boater-only camping and dog walking. The public is encouraged to review the full Draft Compatibility Determination, available at the Richard J. Guadagno Headquarters, Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge, 1020 Ranch Rd., Loleta, California, open 7-4, Monday-Saturday (call for more detailed directions), and at the central Eureka library. The document is also available to be reviewed by appointment at the Friends of the Dunes Office in Manila, California (707-444-1397). **Comments are due to the Service postmarked by August 13, 2004. Mail comments to Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge, 6800 Lanphere Rd., Arcata, CA 95521.** To be informed of the final decision call the refuge at 707-733-5406 after August 30, 2004, or request notification in your comments and include your address.